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The Bush doctrine is a revolutionary way of thinking both according to previous American foreign policy as well as international foreign policy. This type of change needs a huge investment of time and resources. But for me as an Iraqi politician, I have the new reality that Saddam Hussein and his terrorist Ba`ath regime no longer rule in Iraq.

Over the last few months I as an Iraqi liberal have witnessed the departure of the Syrians from Lebanon and many changes have started to begin in the Middle East, including in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. I believe that these changes did not happen by themselves; they happened as a result of the pressure that the United States has put on the regimes in the Middle East. If the Administration continues these efforts we will have reform and a real chance for democracy and peace.

The success of reform movements in the Middle East can only be achieved through the leadership of the United States, the liberal democrats in Middle Eastern countries, and the determination of the people to follow them. The effect of the Bush Doctrine is immeasurable because after the liberation of Iraq the people of the Middle East who live under dictatorial regimes became hopeful that their countries would follow the same path.

There is not one city in the Middle East where an individual is able to speak truthfully and honestly about his or her political views without fearing for his life. There are two exceptions - Iraq and Israel. However, as a result of Iraqis having lived under the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, they are still afraid to speak out publicly. And I see a parallel in Israel where the people's experience of history keeps them from imagining reform or change in their neighbors.


The people of the Middle East are prepared to live like normal human beings and are willing to have democratic reform. They are still suffering greatly because of others who are abusing their religion and the main problem now is



that the extremists understand that they can use the mechanism of democracy for their own goals.

In Iraq, the Islamist parties – Sunni or Shi'i – are totalitarian parties. Totalitarian ideology is the main danger. I believe that there is no difference between ideology that controls the people in the name of God or other nationalist ideologies that do the same in the name of the nation. People are prepared for democracy as long as it is true democracy that gives them human rights and peace.

I believe that Islam is compatible with democracy. But the understanding of the "new Islam" – radical Islam – is completely at odds with the main message of all religions, including mainstream Islam. In the Quran it states that if you kill one being it is as if you have killed the entire world. But now we have people who act in the name of Islam throughout the Middle East who are killing people in the name of Islam. That is why it is very important to have the separation of religion and state.



More than men, women in the Middle East have suffered through dictatorships. They have been the targets of terrorists and a poor economic situation. This situation has had and continues to make an impact on their entire families. The systematic discrimination against women in some Middle Eastern countries will make it more difficult for those countries to become democratic. Since women represent at least half the population of the Middle East, the fact that their voices are not heard means that civil society is in danger.

The fact that the Middle East has always been under the rule of dictatorships means that there is a huge vacuum in understanding how people should behave in a democratic system. That is why it is very important to continue to push for reforms and to stop terrorism; otherwise all of our society will be held hostage and no one will be in a position to learn or be able to think freely.

The Bush Doctrine is an important message that has already been received by the people of the Middle East. At the same time, the dictatorial regimes have understood that message and are adapting their tactics to avoid true reform. In order for the Doctrine to work, there needs to be more understanding of how the dictatorial regimes are playing for time with the hope that the policy of the United States will change. Because they have been receiving support from international bodies such as European countries and their longtime partner, Russia, those regimes are trying to attack reforms and the liberation of Iraq by using the UN Security Council for their interests. I believe that the way to make the Bush Doctrine more effective must come through the development of free market economies and through reforms in the UN system.

Regarding Iraq, we need a clear message from the United States that will promote a strategic relationship between Iraq and the United States. The liberals in Iraq and throughout the Middle East cannot do it alone. They need to receive real moral, political and financial support. It is painful to see that the extremist parties have their own television and radio stations and the number of their newspapers far outnumbers those of the liberals by 20 to 1. Today in Iraq the extremists own over 100 newspapers and the liberals have only five. The extremists are funded with massive support by Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

This strategic relationship is needed because the era of terrorism and reform has just started. That is why we are in real need of an international alliance that will include all of the democratic countries that have suffered from terrorism, such as the United States, Iraq, Israel and Turkey, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. This should be the answer to those terror organizations and regimes that are allied against the United States and against peace and democracy in the Middle East.

Iraq acted for a very long time as a hostage to the interests of other countries and organizations represented by the ideologies of Jamal Abdul Nasser and the Palestinians. Now Iraq and its democratic process is in danger of becoming a hostage to the interests of Iran.

As a next step, the Bush Doctrine must make it clear to the countries in the region that making peace can and must start without waiting for the Palestinian leadership to grasp realpolitik. This will help the Palestinians to become more pragmatic and it ensure the continuation of reforms. The current state of war between Iraq and its neighbors, and Israel, means that all of the reforms will not be able to proceed while the state of war continues.